

Message Text

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ORIGIN PA-02

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DRAFTED BY PA/PRESS KLBROWN:RLD
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TO USDEL SECRETARY PRIORITY

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FOR RESTON FROM PA/PRESS

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SOPN, OVIP (VANCE, CYRUS R.)

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING, MARCH 4

1. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION RE READINESS OF ADMINISTRATION
TO MODIFY MIDEAST PLANE SALE PROPOSALS, ACTING SPOKESMAN
BROWN REPLIED:

AS THE SECRETARY SAID YESTERDAY AGAIN AND THE
PRESIDENT BEFORE HIM, WE CONSIDER THE AIRCRAFT PROPOSALS
TO BE BALANCED AND AN INTEGRAL PART OF OUR OVERALL
POSITION IN THE MIDDLE EAST. THEY ARE INDEPENDENTLY
JUSTIFIED AND MUTUALLY REINFORCING, AS DEPUTY SECRETARY
WARREN CHRISTOPHER SAID YESTERDAY.

AS SUCH, WE STRONGLY BELIEVE CONGRESS SHOULD NOT
DISAPPROVE THEM.

OVER THE PAST WEEKS, WE HAVE BEEN HAVING CONSULTATIONS
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WITH INTERESTED MEMBERS OF CONGRESS TO EXPLAIN THIS
POSITION TO THEM. YESTERDAY, IN THE TESTIMONY BEFORE THE
SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE AND ACTING SECRETARY
CHRISTOPHER'S INFORMAL MEETING WITH THE HOUSE INTERNATIONAL
AFFAIRS COMMITTEE, THAT CONSULTATION INTENSIFIED.

NATURALLY, IN EXPLAINING OUR POSITION, WE ALSO

LISTEN TO THE LEGITIMATE CONCERNS EXPRESSED BY MEMBERS OF CONGRESS. AS MR. CHRISTOPHER SAID YESTERDAY, AS PART OF THE NORMAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE LEGISLATIVE AND EXECUTIVE BRANCHES WE ARE WILLING TO CONSIDER SUGGESTIONS WHICH REFLECT LEGITIMATE CONCERNS.

I HAVE NOTHING FOR YOU ON ANY SPECIFICS OF CHANGES WHICH MIGHT BE CONSIDERED TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT LEGITIMATE CONCERNS EXPRESSED IN CONGRESS.

2. ASKED ABOUT FRENCH DISPATCH OF TROOPS TO CHAD AND COMPARISON WITH PRESENCE OF CUBANS IN AFRICA, BROWN SAID:

WE DON'T REALLY DRAW A PARALLEL BETWEEN THE TWO. I WOULD NOTE THAT AS A FORMER COLONIAL POWER, FRANCE HAS A UNIQUE RELATIONSHIP WITH SEVERAL OF ITS FORMER COLONIES FOR OBVIOUS HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL REASONS, IN ADDITION TO A LONG-STANDING DEFENSE AGREEMENT WITH MANY OF THOSE COUNTRIES. FRANCE ALSO HAS A DIRECT INTEREST IN THE SAFETY OF THOUSANDS OF FRENCH NATIONALS LIVING ABROAD...

FRENCH TROOPS ARE IN CHAD ON A SECURITY MISSION AT THE REQUEST OF THE CHADIAN GOVERNMENT IN FACE OF CEASE-

FIRE, VIOLATION BY REBEL FORCES. ARMED BY LIBYA, REBEL FORCES HAVE LAUNCHED A NEW SERIES OF ATTACKS ON
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GOVERNMENT POSITIONS IN THE NORTH. AS PART OF A LONG-STANDING BILATERAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES, FRENCH FORCES HAVE BEEN INVITED INTO CHAD TO HELP STABILIZE THE SITUATION, TO RESTORE THE CEASE-FIRE, TO PROMOTE AN END TO THE FIGHTING, AND TO PROTECT FRENCH NATIONALS IN CHAD. WE SUPPORT CHADIAN AND FRENCH EFFORTS TO FIND A POLITICAL SOLUTION IN CHAD.

3. BROWN ACKNOWLEDGED THAT SPAIN HAS APPROVED APPOINTMENT OF TODMAN AS AMBASSADOR BUT NOTED ANNOUNCEMENT OF NOMINATION MUST COME FROM WHITE HOUSE. CHRISTOPHER

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